

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, HA

SUBJECT: DEPORTATION OF "CARIBBEAN VISTA" GROUP FROM HAITI

1. SUMMARY: 43 U.S. CITIZENS WHO ARE STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES, AND PARTICIPANTS IN A LOCAL PROGRAM FOR DELINQUENT U.S. TEENAGERS CALLED "CARIBBEAN VISTA" ARE TO BE DEPORTED FROM HAITI AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE ON SATURDAY AND/OR SUNDAY, APRIL 27-28. THE LOCAL GROUP IS SPONSORED BY "NEW HORIZONS YOUTH MINISTRIES", 2720 44TH STREET SE, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN (CONTACT THERE IS GORDON BLOSSOM, TELEPHONE 616/ 897-8475 WHO IS AWARE OF SITUATION). EMBASSY INTERVENTION AT HIGH LEVEL ARRANGED DELAY UNTIL WEEKEND IN ORIGINAL ORDER FOR IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE. GROUP HAS BEEN IN OPERATION IN HAITI REPORTEDLY FOR OVER TWO YEARS WITHOUT LEGAL STATUS AND INDIVIDUAL STAFF AND PARTICIPANTS HAD NOT FULLY COMPLIED WITH HAITIAN IMMIGRATION LAWS. NO ACTION REQUIRED BY DEPARTMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. OF THE 43 U.S. CITIZENS TO BE DEPORTED APRIL 27-28, 24 ARE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 18. THE OTHER 19 ARE STAFF AND FAMILY OF THE "CARIBBEAN VISTA" GROUP. THE GROUP ACCEPTS FROM U.S. COURTS (PRIMARILY IN MICHIGAN) AND PRIVATE FAMILIES YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS AND HAVE A HISTORY OF DELINQUENCY. THE IDEA IS TO EXPOSE THEM TO CULTURAL SHOCK WHILE AT THE SAME TIME INVOLVING THEM IN A "PEACE CORPS" TYPE PROGRAM ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL DIRECTOR, TIM BLOSSOM. THE LOCAL GROUP IS SPONSORED BY "NEW HORIZONS YOUTH MINISTRIES" OF GRAND RAPIDS WHICH IS HEADED BY TIM BLOSSOM'S FATHER, REV. GORDON BLOSSOM. THE LOCAL GROUP HAS BEEN OPERATING UNCLASSIFIED

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FOR OVER TWO YEARS IN HAITI BUT HAS NOT ACQUIRED LEGAL RECOGNITION

BY THE GOH AND THE U.S. CITIZENS INVOLVED HAVE NOT FULLY COMPLIED WITH HAITIAN IMMIGRATION LAWS.

3. TIM BLOSSOM, THE DIRECTOR, REPORTS HE DECIDED RECENTLY TO OBTAIN RECOGNITION FOR "CARIBBEAN VISTA" HERE AND STARTED THE NECESSARY PAPER WORK. HE BELIVES THIS ACTIVITY SURFACED THE GROUP TO THE SURPRISE OF THE GOH AND RESULTED IN THE ORDER FOR THEIR DEPARTURE. ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, TIM BLOSSOM, HIS WIFE AND 2 SMALL CHILDREN PLUS 7 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WERE TAKEN TO POLICE (IMMIGRATION) HEADQUARTERS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE. MR. BLOSSOM ALERTED THE EMBASSY TO THE PROBLEM AT 8:37 P.M. LOCAL AND THE CONSUL WENT AT ONCE TO THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS. THE POLICE DUTY OFFICER INFORMED HIM THAT MAJOR AZOR, DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION, HAD ORDERED THEIR DETENTION AND THAT THEIR DEPORTATION WOULD TAKE PLACE THE FOLLOWING MORNING. NO MENTION WAS MADE AT THIS TIME OF THE OTHER 32 PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM WHO HAD NOT YET BEEN DETAINED. THE CONSUL ARRANGED FOR THE RELEASE OF MRS. BLOSSOM AND HER TWO CHILDREN ON CONDITION THEY REPORT TO THE POLICE THURSDAY, APRIL 25, AT 6:30 A.M. HE WAS UNABLE TO ARRANGE RELEASE OF THE OTHERS. THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM WERE INFORMED BY THE CONSUL ABOUT 10:00 P.M.

4. THE AMBASSADOR DECIDED THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS PROPER FOR HAITIAN IMMIGRATION TO ORDER DETENTION AND DEPORTATION IF IN FACT THESE PERSONS HAD AN IRREGULAR STATUS, IT WAS NOT NORMAL THAT THEY SHOULD BE PICKED UP IN THE EVENING AND THEN ORDERED TO DEPART EARLY THE NEXT MORNING WITHOUT AN OPPORTUNITY TO PACK THEIR CLOTHES AND WITHOUT AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EMBASSY TO OBTAIN MORE DETAILS PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE. THE AMBASSADOR INSTRUCTED THE DCM TO OBTAIN RELEASE TEMPORARILY OF THE PERSONS DETAINED AND TO ATTEMPT TO HAVE THEIR DEPORTATION DELAYED FOR A REASONABLE TIME SO THAT EVENTS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN A MORE ORDERLY MANNER.

5. THE DCM CALLED THE DEFENSE ATTACHE AND THE CONSUL AND INSTRUCTED THE ATTACHE TO CALL THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE GENERAL STAFF AND THE CONSUL TO SPEAK WITH THE POLICE DUTY OFFICER TO PASS ON THE AMBASSADOR'S VIEWS. THIS WAS ONE, ABOUT 11:30 P.M., WEDNESDAY. LATER, THE CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL HILAIRE, CALLED UNCLASSIFIED

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THE DEFENSE ATTACHE AND SAID HE WOULD ARRANGE FOR THE RELEASE OF EVERYONE BUT TIM BLOSSOM UNTIL THURSDAY MORNING AT 6:30 A.M. GENERAL HILAIRE ADDED THAT THE 11 CONCERNED SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DEPART THE NEXT MORNING; HE STATED THAT IF ANY DELAY IN DEPARTURE WERE TO BE OBTAINED, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE EMBASSY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE INTERIOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE BLANCHET.

6. EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVES RETURNED WITH THE PERSONS WHO HAD BEEN DETAINED TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS ON SCHEDULE AT 6:30 A.M. ON THURSDAY, APRIL 25. AT THIS TIME THEY WERE INFORMED BY THE POLICE THAT THE OTHER 32 MEMBERS OF "CARIBBEAN VISTA" WERE TO BE BROUGHT TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS. THIS WAS DONE ABOUT 8:30 A.M. IT WAS STILL NOT CLEAR IF ANYONE WAS TO DEPART HAITI SOON UNTIL THE POLICE OFFICER IN CHARGE INFORMED THE CONSUL THAT MAJOR AZOR, THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRATION, EXPECTED ALL 43 TO COME AT ONCE TO THE AIRPORT FOR DEPARTURE ON AIR FRANCE AT 11:50 A.M. THE AMBASSADOR AND THE DCM WERE ALERTED TO THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS, AND THE AMBASSADOR CALLED SECRETARY BLANCHET AT 10:10 A.M. THE AMBASSADOR'S INTERVENTION RESULTED IN GRANTING AT 10:55 A.M. OF A DELAY IN EXECUTION OF THE DEPARTURE ORDER UNTIL SATURDAY OR SUNDAY, APRIL 27-28 AND IN PERMISSION BEING GRANTED FOR ALL TO REMAIN AT THEIR HOMES (RATHER THAN UNDER DETENTION) UNTIL THEIR DEPARTURE.

7. COMMENT: THE OFFICIAL REASON FOR DEPORTATION APPARENTLY IS FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE IMMIGRATION LAWS OF HAITI. HOWEVER, IT CAME AS A SHOCK TO THE GOH THAT A GROUP OF THIS SIZE COULD OPERATE IN HAITI FOR OVER TWO YEARS WITHOUT COMING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AUTHORITIES. FURTHER, THERE HAD BEEN RUNAWAYS AND OTHER PROBLEMS WHICH PROBABLY CAME TO LIGHT UNDER INVESTIGATION AND WHICH MAY HAVE CONVINCED THE GOH THAT THERE WERE SIMPLY TOO MANY POTENTIAL PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE "CARIBBEAN VISTA" PROGRAM IN HAITI.

8. THE NAMES OF THE U.S. CITIZENS INVOLVED FOLLOW:

TIM BLOSSOM
ROSE BLOSSOM
BONNIE BLOSSOM
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JOSHUA BLOSSOM
JOHN MEYERS
STEVE JOHNSON
PHIL WOLGEMUTH
TED STOTZ
DAVE SUTHERLAND
BOB COLLINS
DALE LEE
BUD GINTER
NANCY HENCKEL
DAVE HENCKEL
SUSAN HENCKEL
JOHN HENCKEL
JOEL HENCKEL
MOLLY HENCKEL

DAVEY SYSWARD
ELLEN
EEEEEEEE

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